

## TUD eyes Phoenix Lake Fixes

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Tuolumne Utilities District is seeking a grant to repair a local creek that feeds Phoenix Lake, the troubled source of drinking water for many of the county's most populated areas.

TUD is applying for about \$350,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to restore about 1,300 feet of stream bed along Powers Creek. Situated on Cedar Ridge Apple Ranch, along Summers Lane and near Apple Valley Ranches, the small stream is contributing to sediment buildup in the lake.

"We're seeing erosion occur and stream bank failures" along the creek, associate engineer Ted Allen said on Tuesday, during a meeting of the TUD Board of Directors.

Proposed work along Powers Creek includes bank restoration, re-sloping, armoring, restoring vegetation and creating plunge pools in the stream. The grant would also cover design work for the project. The work would take two to four years if it moved forward.

Restoration work on Powers Creek campground is a "high priority" project because of its location in the Phoenix Lake watershed, according to the district.

The district recently completed a plan for restoring the small Tuolumne County reservoir and some of its watershed to increase water and habitat quality as well as storage capacity.

One aspect of that restoration plan is sediment and erosion control, as Phoenix Lake is being increasingly filled with sediment. Power Creek runs along a working orchard, and an improved stream bank would reduce sediment buildup and help protect that agricultural land.

If the district receives the grant and moves forward on the project, it will complete the work in-house with TUD workers, Allen said. It may also hire a consultant to help.

"We've had some positive feedback from (the Sierra Nevada Conservancy) on the project," he said.

The entire \$11 million Phoenix Lake restoration, if completed, would involve dredging, wetland improvements, lake access, recreation, fire management and water quality improvements. Highlights include removing 400,000 cubic yards of sediment to restore capacity, shoreline

improvements and various erosion and runoff control projects within the 24-square-mile watershed.

The 88-acre Phoenix Lake is a drinking water source for TUD customers in Sonora, Jamestown, Scenic View and Mono Village, and has long experienced degradation from sediment and pollutants.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy also helped fund initial planning work for the lake restoration with a \$100,000 grant.

In other business, the TUD Board of Directors:

- Appointed Delbert Rotelli to replace Director Barbara Balen on the board overseeing the dissolution of the Sonora Redevelopment Agency. Balen's tenure with the board ends this year and she is not seeking re-election.

The local board and others like it in the state include representatives from local agencies and are in the midst of dismantling the local redevelopment agencies, which has been mandated by the state.

- Recognized Richard Dean, a TUD employee who retired earlier this month. Dean worked on maintenance and repairs on the district's water system since 1987.

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